

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously presented) A search engine for searching a collection of documents, the search engine comprising:

at least one dispatch node, the at least one dispatch node being effective to receive and forward a search query from a user of the search engine;

a plurality of search nodes, coupled to the dispatch node, the search nodes each being effective to receive the search query from a respective dispatch node, and to process the search query using a searching algorithm; and

at least one indexing node, coupled to the search nodes, the at least one indexing node effective to create a respective partition-dependent data set for a respective search node; wherein

the search nodes are logically arranged in a table and stored in a computerized memory, the table comprising a plurality of columns and a plurality of rows, each search node in one of the rows of search nodes including a distinct partition-dependent data set so that a sum of the data sets of all the search nodes in a row yields the collection of documents, and every respective search node in one of the columns of search nodes include substantially the same partition-dependent data set.

13. (Previously presented) The search engine as recited in claim 12, further comprising a plurality of dispatch nodes arranged in a multi-level hierarchical configuration.

14. (Previously presented) The search engine as recited in claim 12, further comprising at least one acquisition node, distinct from the dispatch nodes, the acquisition node effective to acquire results from the search nodes for the search query.

15. (Previously presented) The search engine as recited in claim 14, further comprising a plurality of acquisition nodes arranged in a multi-level hierarchical configuration.

16. (Previously presented) The search engine as recited in claim 15, further comprising a plurality of dispatch nodes arranged in a multi-level hierarchical configuration.

17. (Previously presented) The search engine as recited in claim 16, wherein the configuration of the dispatch nodes is a mirror image of the configuration of the acquisition nodes.

18. (Previously presented) The search engine as recited in claim 12, wherein each search node includes a search software module.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently amended) The search engine as recited in claim 12, wherein [[the]] a number of logical columns corresponds to the number of dispatch nodes.